

VZCZCXRO1559  
PP RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHAK #1753 3431554  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 091554Z DEC 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1429  
INFO RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 6625  
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS ANKARA 001753

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958:N/A  
TAGS: [CVIS](#) [PREL](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [TU](#) [IR](#)  
SUBJECT: Iran Students Vow Protest Will Continue

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On Wednesday December 9, CONOFF surveyed Iranian non-immigrant visa (NIV) applicants regarding the Monday, December 7 and Tuesday, December 8 protests in Iran. According to applicant reports, students vowed to continue their protests until the dean of Tehran University, a hard-line Ayatollah, resigns. One applicant reported violent clashes with the Basij in Tehran. Though no definitive numbers could be given, applicants from various cities said protests were country-wide and larger than the November 4 protest. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) A biomedical student from Shahid Beheshti University in Tehran stated that the protest continued into Tuesday, December 8 in support of those arrested during the previous day's demonstrations. She said that students are now demanding the resignation of a conservative Ayatollah who is dean of Tehran University. She added that Basij forces in plain clothing mixed in with students and used pepper spray in addition to beatings to try to break them up. A student from Tarbiat Modares University in Tehran said demonstrators had poured into the streets. Another student from Sharif University of Technology in Tehran confirmed protests there had continued into Tuesday and that students clashed with Basijis. The student was unaware of any continuation on Wednesday. Another Tehran based mechanical engineering student was unconvinced about the effect of the protests as he viewed the "government is acting very strong" in dealing with the protesters.

¶3. (SBU) Applicants from various cities agreed that these protests occurred in all major urban centers and were much larger than last month's protests, but none could quantify them. As one elderly man from Tabriz noted, "if anyone gives a number it is a lie but they were much larger than those of November 4." He added that he had heard protests continued all over Western Azerbaijan as well as Iran's Kurdistan region.

¶4. (SBU) COMMENT: Generally, most applicants, though skeptical about any resolution to the political situation through the protest movement, remain hopeful for eventual political change. As one middle-aged Iranian woman noted while touching her heart, "the people won't stop until they are satisfied." A self proclaimed apolitical Tehran University of Medical Sciences student remarked how Iran's government has wasted the resources of the country. He added that Iran is a rich country with the youth to build it, and if the government cared about its people and allowed true democracy Iran would flourish. END COMMENT.

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